



Holiday Open House at the Governor's Mansion today

Governor and Mrs. Fletcher will host a Holiday Open House at the Governor's Mansion today from 2:30 to 4:30. Employees should be given up to two hours to attend this event.



Wellness Committee Holds First Meeting, Establishes Guiding Framework

The Cabinet for Health and Family Services Wellness Committee held its first meeting November 22 and laid the groundwork for efforts to create a climate that fosters better wellness for Cabinet employees.

The 22-member Committee, composed of employees from a diverse group of Cabinet programs, was appointed by Cabinet Secretary James Holsinger in early November and will report to the Secretary's Office and serve as an advisory body for the Cabinet.

The Committee selected Sandra Brock of the Secretary's Office to serve as Chair and Gayle Yocum of the Department for Community-Based Services to serve as Vice Chair. The Committee also established vision and mission statements.

Brock said that the vision is "to create, promote and sustain a workplace environment that encourages healthy lifestyles and improves employee health" and the Committee's mission is "to promote and encourage sustainable healthy lifestyles for Cabinet for Health and Family Services employees."

"The goal is to provide employees with good information and opportunities for activity," said Yocum. "We hope that Cabinet employees will incorporate these into their lives because they are realistic and enjoyable -- and take them home to family and extended family. We are committed to providing a range of activities that all employees can participate in."

In addition, Committee members volunteered for one of four subcommittees: nutrition, smoking cessation, physical activity and communications. These Committees will meet independently to identify two factors necessary for success in their area and report their ideas to the larger group at its next meeting on December 16.

The Committee is also committed to providing opportunities for employees to give feedback and make suggestions. Channels for feedback will be discussed at the next meeting as well, Brock said. "We want to reach out to employees for guidance on our mission and activities they'd like to see. The goal is to create a positive environment where employees feel supported and encouraged to take care of themselves."

The Committee also discussed the search for a full-time Wellness Coordinator for the entire Cabinet, to be based in the Department for Public Health as part of a federal grant. The Wellness Coordinator will be hired soon to assist in implementing Committee recommendations.

"This is a level of focus for state government on employee wellness that will significantly impact our risk pool," said Brock. "We are lucky to have Cabinet leadership that fully supporting these efforts."

Employee Spotlight: Dr. Eugene Foster

Dr. Eugene Foster, Undersecretary of Children and Family Services

By Anya Armes Weber



Dr. Eugene Foster was appointed undersecretary of Children and Family Services this March. He oversees the Department for Community Based Services (DCBS) and the Commission for Children with Special Health Care Needs (CCSHCN).

The position seems a natural fit for Foster, who has spent his career helping families and children.

Foster is a licensed psychologist with a doctorate in school psychology and special education from Boston University. He also holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from Barrington College in Barrington, Rhode Island, and master's and certificate of advanced graduate study degrees in psychology from Rhode Island College.

He previously held leadership positions with Ramey-Estep Homes in Ashland; Elkins Mountain School, Tygart Valley Counseling Center and UTD Inc. in West Virginia; and Rhode Island's North Smithfield School Department. He also has taught at Davis and Elkins College, Providence College and Rhode Island College over the years.



As past chairman of the Kentucky Children's Alliance Board and previous Kentucky state leader for the Child Welfare League of America, Foster has been very involved in shaping public policy concerning children and family issues at both the state and national levels.

He currently serves as a lecturer in counseling psychology at the University of Louisville's Department of Educational and Counseling Psychology Graduate School and was training consultant with the Center for School Safety at Eastern Kentucky University.

From 2001 until his cabinet appointment, he was the executive vice president of Maryhurst, Inc., a private child welfare agency in Louisville.

Foster said one of his priorities for DCBS is to improve technology so staff can do their work better and easier. "We're working on updating the way we use TWIST [the system that tracks children in state care] to cut paperwork and data-entry time," he said. "If caseworkers are doing paperwork all the time, they can't provide services.

"This is a long-term goal, but very doable," he said.

He also supports an idea to give staff handheld technology to immediately enter case information.

Foster said it's important to use evidence-based decision-making to improve child and family services.

"We must use objective information to measure risk rather than subjective or anecdotal information," he said. "Our services will be data driven, research driven and technology driven."

Proper documentation is especially important in preparing the continuous quality assessment reports for each case, Foster said. "Good assessment leads to better services." DCBS' No. 1 priority is finding stable, permanent arrangements for children, Foster said.

"All our other services rotate around the well-being of children – child support, family support, child care and protection and permanency. It's all a form of assistance to help families raise healthy children."

Another of Foster's priorities is adult protection. He is coordinating a team to prefile legislation that will enhance KRS 209, the Kentucky law that protects vulnerable adults from abuse.

"We are working with a bipartisan group from the house and senate," he said, including Rep. Jimmie Lee, D-Elizabethtown, and Sen. Katie Stine, R-Fort Thomas.

"Advocacy groups like the AARP are also involved. We hope this is the first legislation passed next year. Now is the time for us to get in place a system to ensure that elders aren't abused, neglected or exploited."

A lot of the effort to protect seniors comes from Protection and Permanency staff, Foster said, and a lot comes from people at the community level. "The Local Coordinating Councils on Elder Abuse are working hard to form partnerships with providers in each community."

That same community focus is evident in the Commission for Children with Special Health Care Needs, the agency that provides medical treatment to children with a variety of challenging health conditions. CCHCN has adjusted its mission with the times, Foster said.

"The commission has regional clinics that deliver quality medical care to children in their areas," he said. "They have evolved depending on the changing special health-care needs of our children."

With all of state government operating under a spending plan rather than a budget, Foster said it's even more important to allocate funding where it helps the most people in the best way.

"The bottom line is there is no new money coming into the system," he said. "We have to take what we do have and use it better."

Foster lives in Louisville with his wife, Dianne. They enjoy boating and other water activities.

Another favorite hobby is traveling, especially to Michigan, where two of the Fosters' three grandchildren live.

Program Spotlight: Keeping Kids Safe: OIG's Division of Regulated Child Care

"We want kids to be safe. When parents drop off their children at day care, it can be an emotional time – the least we can do is ensure that they are in a safe and nurturing environment," says Robert W. Hester, director of OIG's Division of Regulated Child Care. "It's their tax dollars and they are our customers."

"Inspector General Robert J. Benvenuti, III understands that this division has numerous duties, but believes strongly that our primary responsibility is enforcement and ensuring regulatory compliance. We all understand that our focus is, and will be, on those issues," states Hester.



"And, I'm very pleased with the professionals that I've encountered in this division. They want to do the job, do it right the first time, and continue to raise the level of professionalism," said Hester, who is new to state government, but has over 25 years of experience as a health care administrator.

The Division of Regulated Child Care has a 75-person staff that is responsible for certifying 1,132 homes and licensing 2,283 day care facilities, 92 child-placing agencies and 79 group homes throughout Kentucky. The day care facilities alone have the capacity to provide care for 170,091 children.

Certified homes provide in-home care for six or less non-related children. However, the most common type of day care – licensed – falls into two categories: Type I and Type II. Type I is the traditional kind that most people think of where several children are cared for in a professional facility or home setting with a designated area. On the other hand, Type II refers to a home with up to 12 non-related children. In addition, OIG also licenses child-placing agencies which provide foster care, adoption and/or independent living programming. These agencies provide 24-hour-a-day care often operated by the Department for Community Based Services or Juvenile Justice. Group homes and child-caring facilities are also licensed and provide around-the-clock care for multiple children.

There is a central office in Frankfort and four regional offices throughout the commonwealth in Hopkinsville, Lexington, London and Louisville. The regional offices are headed by regional program managers, "who are a tremendously talented group of people," according to Hester.

Job positions within the division range from administrative and clerical to human service surveyors to regional program managers. The recent CHFS reorganization created two branches within the central office: Operations and Compliance. The Operations Branch focuses on day-to-day duties such as mailing licensing packets to providers, printing and mailing recommended licenses and tracking survey results. The Compliance Branch looks for problem areas, documents adverse actions and takes action to ensure that providers comply with state and federal child care laws and regulations, and analyzes licensure documentation received from the regional offices.

Employees in this division usually have strong backgrounds in childhood development, human services, or education. In addition, specific work training is provided. "We have formalized surveyor training and on-the-job shadowing of new employees for at least six to

eight weeks with more specialized training as needed," said Hester.

Employees are trained in the basics of investigation beginning with how to conduct an investigation, follow through and submit reports. New training on various topics is provided as necessary. "For example, the regulations changed for child-placing about a month ago and we made sure employees were updated on these changes," he said.

In addition, every staff member is trained to take complaints. "We don't want anyone put off and not have their concerns addressed. Public opinion indicates that this is one of our primary concerns," explains Hester. "If whoever answered the telephone when someone called in with a complaint couldn't provide immediate assistance, it's tantamount to calling 911 and being put on hold. So, we've ensured that this won't happen because it's simply unacceptable."

The division also administers the STARS program, a voluntary system for identifying quality in licensed and certified child care settings. The program uses a scale of one to four stars to identify levels of quality above and beyond those required by child care licensing. The standards used are based on factors such as: staff to child ratios, overall group size, caregiver education and training, parent involvement and program curriculum. Although the ranking system goes up to four stars, a rating of one star is still considered very good, indicating a quality of child care surpassing what is required by the regulatory minimum standards.

The ratings are determined by specially trained STAR Team Raters in the division, who have received in-depth training from the authors of the Harms & Cryer Environment Rating Scales. These measurement tools are based on research conducted at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. The Regional Program Managers of the Division of Licensed Child Care serve as the anchors for the program. As anchors, they are responsible for interpreting best practices in early childhood development programs.

The STARS rating system, which provides parents with a valuable resource when searching for a childcare setting outside of their home, began in January 2001 as a pilot project, with 77 childcare providers volunteering to participate and receive ratings. Today there are 650 participating providers throughout the commonwealth. Hester has only the highest regard for division employees. "People within this division take their responsibilities very seriously and are always looking to improve and raise the work product standard. Respect is earned and I have all the



respect in the world for these people in the past and today," said Hester.

Turner appointed Acting Medicaid Commissioner

The Cabinet for Health and Family Services announced the appointment of Shannon R. Turner as acting commissioner for the Department for Medicaid Services on Dec. 1.

Turner most recently served as deputy commissioner for the department, a position to which she was appointed in February by Governor Ernie Fletcher.

A native of Harlan County, Turner is a graduate of the University of Kentucky College of Law and Georgetown College.

She previously was director of governmental affairs for Bluegrass Family Health and compliance administrator for UnitedHealthcare of Kentucky. Turner was previously vice chair of the Kentucky Association of Health Plans and served on the Health Insurance Advisory Council.

As acting commissioner, Turner will oversee operations and initiatives of the state's Medicaid program, including the Kentucky Medicaid Modernization plan.

"Medicaid is a large and complex program which requires experienced, detail-driven leadership," said Dr. James W. Holsinger, Jr., secretary of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services. "Shannon brings impressive skill and know-how to this challenging position, and we are delighted to announce her appointment as acting commissioner of Medicaid Services."

The holiday season doesn't have to be a bummer

By Jason Padgett

Each year as the holiday season approaches we are reminded of the holiday events of years past – good or bad. We may also be dealing with the adjustments in our lives from the preceding year such as job changes; the birth, illness or death of loved ones; moving away from family or friends; the stress of having a family member in military service overseas or a myriad of other possibilities that lead to stress, anxiety, and depression.

For some people these changes have a more intense impact during the holiday season. This may manifest itself in self-

examination, consideration of the unknown future for the coming year or even in bouts of depression.

If you are experiencing a high level of anxiety or emotional stress, consider making small changes in order to make the season more manageable – emotionally and physically. To avoid being "bummed out" and to have a more enjoyable time during the holidays this year consider:

- ◆ Traditions – Some families have traditions which have been in place for years. Others may be very new. Either way, these traditions may be changed or put on hold if they are difficult to maintain this year. There is no rule book that requires a family to do the same thing each year so feel free to change if that will work best for you and your family. On the other hand, if traditions are soothing and comforting, by all means continue them. Yet remain sensitive to their impact upon you and your family and be open to changes needed by each of you. Be open to trying something new.
- ◆ Expectations – Keep your expectations realistic. Make a list of things to be done. Are there tasks which are unnecessary or that you could have others help to complete? Then complete the remaining tasks as time and finances allow.
- ◆ Time for Yourself – Spending time with others who are special and supportive is very important during the holidays. Yet is also vital that you spend time taking care of yourself. Care for yourself by eating well, exercising, getting adequate sleep and taking time to do something nice just for you. And most importantly breathe and take the time to relax.
- ◆ The Good News – The stress and intensity of holidays is generally short-term and subsides as daily routines are resumed. And remember to seek the listening ear of a family member, friend, physician, clergy, or professional counselor when additional support is needed.

In the event that you or a loved one is overwhelmed to the point of depression due to the fact that a loved one is not present due to death, extreme illness or military service, here are some coping tips.

- ◆ Acknowledge their absence and the feelings you have. Grief is possible in the case of death or absence. It is important to recognize grief as a normal and natural process. Avoiding the fact that someone or something is missing will not eliminate the feelings.
- ◆ Find a way to include the memory. Plan some activity that will honor the absent person. This could be as simple as a moment of silence or displaying a picture.





- ◆ Choose good holiday companionship. It is important to plan ahead and avoid isolation during the holidays. Choose people with whom you feel safe and comfortable to spend time with during the holidays.
- ◆ Avoid excessive alcohol consumption. Alcohol and drugs are used as a way of trying to avoid. However, they only increase the negative feelings.

If you or someone you know is coping with feelings of grief, helplessness, hopelessness, or isolation, help is available from anywhere in the state by calling your local community mental health center (visit http://mhmr.ky.gov/files/CMHC_Crisis.pdf) or dialing 911. For further information on mental health, visit <http://mhmr.ky.gov/MH/>.

Office of Administrative and Fiscal Affairs personnel changes

The Office of Administrative and Fiscal Affairs is happy to announce two changes within its organizational structure. Rob Edwards has been Special Detailed as Executive Director of Fiscal Services and Chief Financial Officer for the Cabinet for Health and Family Services. Edwards will oversee three divisions: Financial Reporting, General Accounting and Facility Management. MyLinda Sims has been Special Detailed as Executive Officer for Undersecretary Duane Kilty. She will facilitate any cross-cabinet issues with Undersecretary Kilty's four offices. Sims will also be on call for emergencies and other critical issues.

Safe Infants Act protects babies, provides permanent homes

Typically, newborns aren't among the hundreds of children waiting for permanent homes as part of the state's public adoption services.



The 2-year-old law that allows parents to anonymously place infants that they cannot care for at selected "safe havens" has resulted in seven incidents of babies getting a second chance with caring families through safe abandonment.

The Thomas J. Burch Safe Infants Act, enacted in April 2002, made it legal for parents and others acting on their

behalf, to leave a baby up to 72 hours old at any hospital, with emergency medical service (EMS) personnel or with any firefighter or police officer. Parents remain anonymous and cannot be pursued or prosecuted unless an abandoned infant shows signs of abuse or neglect.

Lisa Durbin of the Division of Protection and Permanency in the state Cabinet for Health and Family Services said November - Adoption Awareness Month - is a good time to remind Kentuckians of the law.

"We want to increase awareness of this law in Kentucky," Durbin said. "Women in crisis or who may have hidden a pregnancy can ensure their baby will be safe with this law."

After examination and necessary medical treatment at a hospital, babies are placed in specially prepared foster homes by the cabinet, beginning the adoption process. Supporters of the law intended it to eliminate incidents of newborns being left unsafely outdoors or in trash cans, restrooms or other public places.

But "all but one abandonment occurred in hospitals just after delivery," Durbin said.

At the safe drop-off points, parents are given an information packet that includes coded bracelets for parent and baby and voluntary medical disclosure forms that can be left with the baby or returned by mail. The information helps caregivers determine treatment for the baby and is kept confidential.

Durbin said the parents' medical history is important in determining the future needs of the child.

The packet also includes a brochure teaching mothers how to care for themselves after delivery.

Parents have 30 days to reconsider leaving their baby. After this time has passed, the cabinet asks the courts to terminate parental rights, freeing the baby for adoption. In five of the seven incidents, the children have been adopted. One planned adoption awaits a court date.

One mother came forward to reclaim her child, Durbin said, and the protection and permanency office worked with her toward reunification.

Durbin said it's been hard getting word about the law to people - especially women who might have second thoughts about motherhood or teens who feel they have few options.



In Louisville, a nonprofit group called Secret Safe Haven for Newborns promotes the law and collaborates with hospital emergency rooms to ensure safe abandonment of newborns. The group is part of the cabinet's Jefferson County Community Partnership for Protecting Children. "Placing a child for adoption is a difficult choice," Durbin said. "But giving children a place where they are protected is the best thing you can do for them."

Women can plan for adoption through the cabinet even before their babies are born.

And families who want to keep their babies but fear it will be a struggle can get support and referrals to other service agencies through the cabinet.

Learn more about the Safe Infants law online at http://cfc.state.ky.us/a_safe_place_index.asp. Find out more about adoption by calling the cabinet at (800) 232-KIDS.

Health tip of the week: Holiday stress survival tips

By Anne Parr, R.N.

The holiday season starts earlier every year. With all the hype and advertising, it's hard not to get a little stressed out over the whole affair.



One of the best ways to keep your tension level from reaching El Nino proportions is by getting more exercise. If you're too busy to exercise, then you are simply too busy. Maybe you just need a little help. Try these suggestions below to see how you can fit some fun-filled activity into a busy holiday schedule.

- ◆ **City Sidewalks, Busy Sidewalks** — Yes, shopping is exercise. To burn the most calories, shop in an area where there are hills and steps. If you go to the mall, park as far away as possible in order to increase the amount of time spent walking continuously. Calorie burn: 8.2 calories per minute (hills), 5.2 calories per minute (indoor flooring).
- ◆ **Oh Tannenbaum! Oh Tannenbaum!** — Cutting down your own holiday tree is a lot of fun and good exercise. In addition, you get the added benefit of a beautiful, fresh tree. It can be a memorable family experience or some time to yourself. Calorie burn: sawing by hand, 8.3 calories per minute; ax chopping, slow, 5.3 calories per minute.

- ◆ **Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire** — A Fire needs firewood. Carrying logs is a great calorie burner: 12.6 per minute (full armload).
- ◆ **Deck the Halls** — Reaching up over your head is a natural way to stretch and burn a few extra calories. Calorie burn: 2.2 to 3.3 calories per minute, depending on the weight of the object lifted.
- ◆ **Walking in a Winter Wonderland** — Walking outdoors in the new snow will get the whole family in the holiday spirit. The calorie burn: 5.6 calories per minute
- ◆ **Jingle Bell, Jingle Bell, and Jingle Bell Rock** — Dancing is the perfect way to stay away from the buffet table and burn off some of those extra cookies. Calorie burn: slow dancing 3.5 calories per minute, fast-paced dancing 10.4 calories per minute.
- ◆ **Silent Night** — Sometimes we are too exhausted to even think about exercising. Instead of going for the cookie jar, try playing soft music and simply meditating. If you just can't relax alone, make an appointment with a massage therapist once a week for the three weeks before your holiday rush. While relaxation does not burn many calories, it is extremely important for your mental and physical health.

Like all truly important things in life, good health is a gift that money can't buy. The holiday season can be a time of peace and renewal. Keep your calendar clear for some time to exercise and meditate.
Happy Holidays!

Advisory for Frankfort HR Complex Employees - Parking solutions

The Finance and Administration Cabinet (FAC) will be implementing several solutions to problems in CHR parking lots.

Speeding through HR Complex parking lots and the road in front of the building is an increasing problem. FAC Facilities staff will install speed bumps in these areas in the near future, and a Kentucky State Police trooper will be assigned to randomly run radar and issue tickets to speeders.

Parking violations will also be addressed. Facility Officers have compiled a list of recurring offenders who park in no-parking or reserved spaces. All vehicles parked illegally in these areas will be towed.





Got brand? Logo merchandise available

Logo Merchandise Lets You Show Your Unbridled Spirit

Now you can wear your spirit on your sleeve.

Governor Ernie Fletcher announced today that a limited number of official state branded products are now available for sale at www.KentuckyUnbridledSpirit.com.

Visitors to the Web site can order t-shirts, hats and sweatshirts, all emblazoned with the state's new "Unbridled Spirit" brand. All products are of high quality and available in multiple colors and sizes. In addition, for a limited time, a free bumper sticker will be included with every purchase.

"Public support for the branding effort has just been incredible," said Kentucky Tourism Commissioner Randy Fiveash. "And we see this as a chance for people to continue to participate in the process. What a great opportunity to spread the word about the new brand and show off your Kentucky pride."

New products will be added over the weeks and months ahead, as the Commonwealth will announce a comprehensive merchandising plan in the near future.

Employee Enrichment

By Anya Armes Weber



Employee Enrichment is a weekly feature for CHFS staff. These tips for making work better will focus on team building, customer service and personal development.

As our work opportunities grow, our expectations from others and of ourselves rise higher. Multitasking can leave us weary by dividing our attention among too many tasks.

Here are some tips to survive multitasking and even improve your overall performance.

- ◆ Concentrate on one task at a time and complete it before moving on to the next.

- ◆ Try to handle each piece of paper only once, deal with it rather than shuffling it around your desk.
- ◆ If you are in the middle of a conversation, don't interrupt it by starting another, until you have finished the first.
- ◆ Concentrate on the present. The ability to stay focused will give you a sense of accomplishment as you see the completed tasks grow.

Tenure Times Tattler available online

The state tenure organization has posted the Tenure Times Tattler newsletter. The newsletter is located at the following web site: www.ten-ure.org

Visit us online!

To view the online version of CHFS Focus, visit our web site at <http://chfs.ky.gov/newsletter>.

Note to readers: CHFS will not publish CHFS Focus on the week of Nov. 22 – 26 due to the Thanksgiving holiday.